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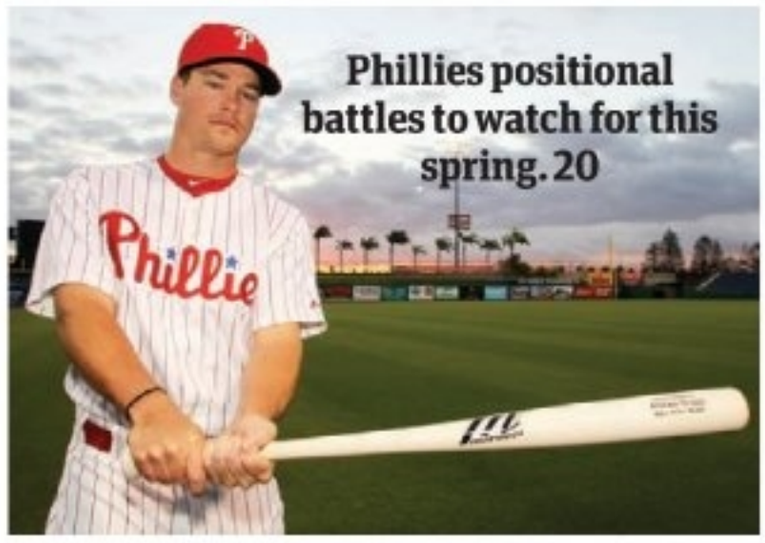
DARKNESS FALLS ON WOLVERINE

Hugh Jackman goes out gritty with the brutal 'Logan.' 13



Phillies positional battles to watch for this spring. 20

Martina McBride rocks the Keswick tonight. 16

HIGH ACHIEVERS

Philly man aims to prove you can be a stoner without being a slacker. 4

WORLD CULTURE DAY

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EPA PROPOSAL TARGETS CLIMATE, CLEAN WATER

1 The White House is proposing to slash a quarter of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's budget, targeting climate-change programs and those designed to prevent air and water pollution like lead contamination, a source with direct knowledge of the proposal said. President Donald Trump has long signaled his intention to reverse former President Barack Obama's climate-change initiatives. But Trump has vowed his planned overhaul of green regulation would not jeopardize America's water and air quality. The budget proposal, which aims to slice the environmental regulator's overall budget by 25 percent to $6.1 billion and staffing by 20 percent to 12,400 as part of a broader effort to fund increased military spending, would cut deeply into programs like climate protection, environmental justice and enforcement. REUTERS

WHITE SUPREMACY FLYERS ON BOSTON CAMPUS

2 Flyers promoting white supremacy were found posted across the University of Massachusetts Boston campus recently, school officials said. In an email sent to the UMass community, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Winston Langley said the flyers were "targeting immigrants and minority persons — be they students, faculty, staff or visitors — and causing anxiety and anger." Langley also noted that the group responsible, Identity Evropa, has reportedly put up similar flyers at other universities in Massachusetts as well as several other states. Identity Evropa describes itself as a "generation of awakened Europeans who have discovered that we are part of the great peoples, history and civilization that flowed from the European continent," according to its website. KRISTIN TOUSSAINT

OBAMA TO VISIT HUB IN MAY FOR KENNEDY AWARD

3 Barack Obama will visit Boston's Columbia Point in early May to receive the 2017 Centennial John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award. Given a couple weeks before the 100-year anniversary of Kennedy's birth, the award will be presented to the two-term Democrat by Caroline Kennedy, who was Obama's ambassador to Japan, and her son Jack Schlossberg. Caroline Kennedy

is the daughter of the late president, who was born in Brookline. Obama's legacy leading the nation for eight years has yet to be settled, and President Donald Trump has committed himself to dismantling many of Obama's programs and setting the country on a new course. STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

SESSIONS RECUSES HIMSELF FROM RUSSIA PROBES

5 U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions removed himself on Thursday from any investigations into alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election because he was involved with President Donald Trump's campaign. But Sessions, a longtime U.S. senator before becoming the country's top law enforcement official, said he did nothing wrong by not disclosing during Senate testimony that he had met last year with Russia's ambassador. He said the meetings were in his capacity as senator, not as a campaign aide. "I have recused myself in the matters that deal with the Trump campaign," Sessions told reporters at a hastily arranged news conference. Several fellow Republicans in Congress had called for the move, while Democrats urged him to resign. REUTERS GETTY IMAGES

DRUG CZAR STRESSES WORK WITH MEXICO

4 The head of counter-narcotics at the State Department stressed the importance of working with Mexico in countering the flow of killer drugs, a cooperative effort that has been called into question by President Donald Trump's plan to build a border wall. William Brownfield estimated that more than 90 percent of the heroin consumed in the U.S. currently comes from Mexico. The White House has said a wall will stem the flow of drugs, crime and illegal immigration, but Mexico has warned that a breakdown in relations could affect cooperation on these very issues. While drugs continue to stream across the border, Brownfield argued that the U.S. was better able to deal with the problem today than a decade ago because of international cooperation, including joint operations and intelligence sharing with Mexico. REUTERS

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MATT PRIGGE, NATIONAL FILM EDITOR

Anne Heche and Sandra Oh are no longer just acclaimed actresses; now they're action gods. In the new indie comedy "Catfight," in select theaters and on VOD, they play women who beat the ever-living crap out of each other. We talk to the two legends about how they learned to throw mighty punches without actually hurting each other. If you need the link: **metro.us/entertainment**

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Campaign enlists stoners, not slackers

South Philly pot smoker forms #NotALazyStoner campaign.

HAYDEN MITMAN
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Justin Michaud participates in charitable events organized by local marijuana activists. PROVIDED

At age 37, Justin Michaud of South Philly, might be the most active pot smoker in Philadelphia.

A long-distance walker, endurance athlete and musician, Michaud regularly supports regular charity events, holds a full-time office job and runs his own regular podcast, called "Wake The F Up."

As if that doesn't keep him busy, he has now launched a campaign intended to show the world that pot smokers aren't the zoned-out, munchie-obsessed layabouts that many people imagine.

Michaud calls it the #NotALazyStoner campaign.

So far, he's used the campaign to share workout tips — he's able to exercise while smoking marijuana — and to take a group on a long hike. He is also getting the campaign involved in performing community service.

"My focus is to show everybody that people who smoke cannabis aren't lazy," he said during a recent interview.

Michaud said his interest in sharing the stories of active, productive pot smokers started after he read a news story about local Philadelphia marijuana activist and Marine Corps veteran Mike Whiter. At the time, Michaud had been running his Wake the F Up podcast for about three years, and he'd been using the platform to interview interesting people in the city.

> *"My focus is to show everybody that people who smoke cannabis aren't lazy."*
> Justin Michaud

Michaud said that Whiter's story of a man who has said marijuana use saved his life after he was diagnosed with PTSD, spoke to him, because Michaud has been long familiar with marijuana's medicinal uses.

Michaud's said his sister used the drug regularly when she was fighting colon cancer.

"I said immediately, 'We need to get this guy on the podcast'," remembered Michaud.

The two became fast friends, said Michaud. Whiter even photographed and shared his experience at a neighborhood cleanup that Michaud organized through the #NotALazyStoner campaign — it took place on Feb. 11 at the intersection of Broad and Oregon streets — for the blog, Elevated Nation.

Since then, Michaud has jumped headfirst into marijuana activism in the city. He's supported charity events organized by Philadelphia's marijuana activism community and has decided to start a community service campaign of his own.

"This is the only way I knew how to give back," he said.

The campaign, he said, started as a video series of him working out and sharing tips as he exercised while smoking marijuana. But, he quickly decided to include other activities in the series, which led to a group hike and, most recently, last month's neighborhood cleanup.

Michaud said he's now hoping to organize a cleanup of the Delaware River through the #NotALazyStoner campaign.

"By doing all this stuff, I was like, 'Here's a whole other thing we can start,'" he said. "Good people smoke marijuana and it gets me motivated. … I've met people who aren't smoking to get high, but they are using it to save their lives. … And, I want to help good people."

Mayor's proposed city budget includes cash to fight opioid addiction

Fighting an opioid epidemic that claimed more than 900 lives in Philadelphia last year is among the priorities of a spending plan being proposed by Mayor Jim Kenney.

Kenney unveiled his $4.4. billion budget and five-year plan Thursday in a speech at City Council chambers.

Kenney said $1.9 million earmarked for fighting opioid addiction would go to a variety of resources, including public education and tracking treatment facility openings, with $1.5 million budgeted to the same programs in future years.

Kenney wants to distribute the anti-overdose drug naloxone to 10,000 residents in the Fairhill and Kensington neighborhoods where heroin use is rampant.

Mayor Jim Kenney CHARLES MOSTOLLER

"We are also requesting the funds necessary to target the Philadelphia doctors who prescribe the most opioids and educate them on how to stop putting their patients at risk for addiction," Kenney said.

The plans have already earned positive feedback from community leaders.

"Philadelphia, like other parts of the country is in the midst of an opioid epidemic never before witnessed," said Prevention Point Philadelphia director Jose A Benitez. "Like never before, support for more recovery services are needed to reverse this trend."

> *"Philadelphia, like other parts of the country, is in the midst of an opioid epidemic never before witnessed."*
> Jose A Benitez

Others credited Kenney's attack on opioid addiction as being a smart move to break the cycle of poverty.

"As a Philadelphian, he [Kenney] knows that addiction and the drug trade tear apart the fabric of families and neighborhoods and that law enforcement alone cannot solve this problem. He also understands that everyone living under bridges injecting heroin are someone's sons, daughters, sisters and brothers," said Impact Services CEO Casey O'Donnell. "Jim has personally come to the epicenter of opioid addiction and drug trade in Kensington, spoken with neighbors, and seen for himself what the challenges are."

SAM NEWHOUSE

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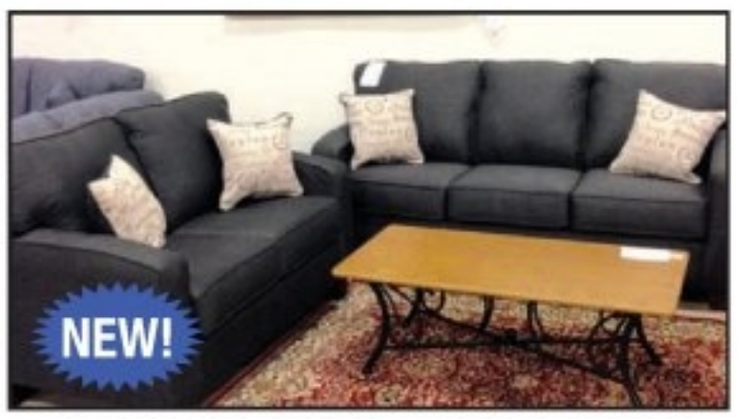

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More than $210,000 has been raised toward repairing headstones toppled at the Mount Carmel Cemetery over the weekend, and for information leading to an arrest and conviction. KAITLYN MOORE

$210K raised for Mount Carmel Cemetery damages, reward

Philadelphia police are still investigating the incident, which left more than 100 headstones toppled.

ALEXIS SACHDEV
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A combined $210,000 has been raised since Sunday toward repairing the Frankford Mount Carmel Cemetery and as reward money to help catch the vandals who desecrated at least 100 headstones in the Jewish burial ground.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, which organized a rally, Stand Against Hate, Thursday afternoon, has received $120,000 toward the cost of restoration and repairs. A separate GoFundMe page has raised more than $21,000 as of Thursday morning, which will be donated to the federation.

According to the Philadelphia Police Department, a reward totaling $69,000 has been raised by a variety of sources, including the Anti-Defamation League, the Office of Mayor Jim Kenney, City Councilman Alan Domb and the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No. 5. The amount will be given to anyone with information leading to an arrest and conviction in the crime.

Between 100 and 150 headstones were toppled at the burial ground sometime on Saturday night, just a day before dozens of Jewish community centers along the East Coast received bomb threats, including 11 in Pennsylvania.

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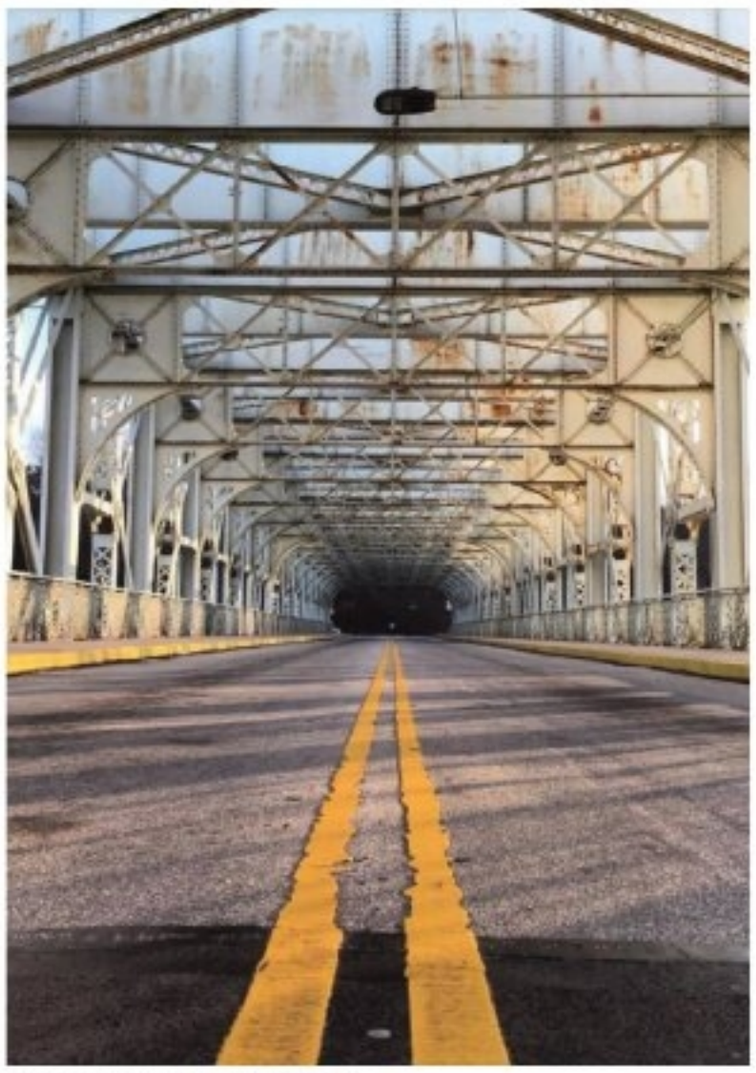

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Tens of thousands gathered to show solidarity with the Women's March. ALL IMAGES COURTESY GETTY IMAGES

International Women's Day may see activism jolt from tumult over Trump

Observed on March 8, the worldwide event has a renewed sense of political purpose in the U.S. this year, experts and advocates say.

KRISTIN TOUSSAINT
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A day after the inauguration of President Donald Trump, millions of women flooded the streets across the United States and around the world in political protest. They made their voices heard — along with men — as part of the historic Women's March. The turnout in Washington was one of the largest demonstrations in U.S. history.

Next week, to coincide with the annual International Women's Day, some of the same organizers are staging a different kind of protest throughout the U.S., but one they hope will send just as strong a message.

This one is being called "A Day Without Women." Organizers are encouraging women to take the day off from "paid and unpaid labor."

Although separate from the actual International Women's Day events, it is in keeping with the spirit, they said.

"On International Women's Day, March 8, women and our allies will act together for equity, justice and the human rights of women and all gender-oppressed people, through a one-day demonstration of economic solidarity," organizers wrote.

International Women's Day got its start in 1908, when 15,000 women marched in New York City, demanding higher wages and voting rights.

This year, on Wednesday, there are hundreds of official events scheduled in more than 65 countries to celebrate the day throughout the world. In the U.S. alone, there will be 150 events. The occasion continues to expand, and in addition to extending across oceans, it has been adopted by the United Nations and also includes corporate sponsors.

Each year, there is a different campaign theme to International Women's Day to address topical issues. This year's theme is "Be Bold for Change." Organizers are asking supporters to "call on the masses or call on yourself to help forge a better working world — a more gender-inclusive world."

Be Bold for Change is a statement that could have been applied to the marches that took place in January, and to the upcoming call to action next week, said Michael Bronski, a professor at Harvard's Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality department. He described the idea of "A Day Without Women" as a "bold political statement."

As did Tia Gordon, a spokeswoman for the global nonprofit Catalyst, which aims to accelerate the progress of women in the workplace. Catalyst is an official charity partner of the International Women's Day organization.

"Women are almost half the talent pool globally, so that means they're half the brains. Any woman who chooses to strike will affect a business and their bottom line," Gordon said.

Women also perform 75 percent of all unpaid work, including child care and elder care, along with cleaning, cooking and other domestic responsibilities. If unpaid work was counted toward a country's Gross Domestic Product, estimates are that it would add as much as $10 trillion in annual output, she said.

International Women's Day

The occasion will see dozens of events take place in and around March 8, in cities throughout the U.S. Here's where to find one in your city:

PHILADELPHIA
Period Play: Eight Anachronisms from the Future Past: This live performance was created by the Philadelphia Women's Theatre Festival in honor of International Women's Day. Period Play is a "staged reading featuring historical women navigating the modern day patriarchy," and will take place March 8, at 7:30 p.m.

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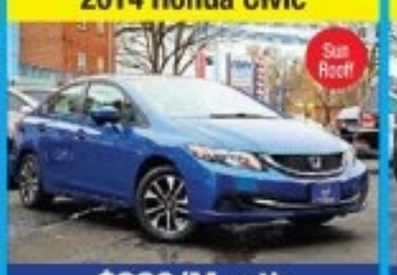

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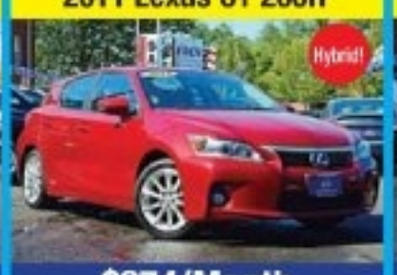

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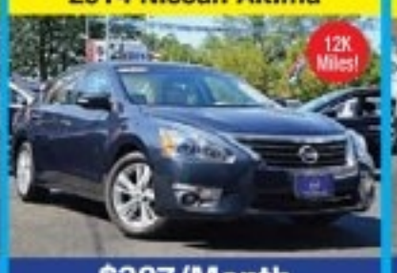

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2014 Nissan Pathfinder S — Like New! — $379/Month

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Federal authorities raid Caterpillar's Illinois facilities

A spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney Office for the Central District of Illinois, Sharon Paul, confirmed that federal law enforcement officials conducted searches at locations in Peoria, East Peoria and Morton, Illinois, but did not say why agents raided the three facilities.

Federal law enforcement officials conducting a criminal probe of heavy machinery manufacturer Caterpillar Inc searched three of its facilities on Thursday, prompting a sharp sell-off in the company's stock.

Caterpillar, in a statement issued on Thursday afternoon, said it believed the search was part of an Internal Revenue Service investigation related to profits earned by a Swiss parts subsidiary, Caterpillar SARL, or CSARL.

It said that "while the warrant is broadly drafted, we believe the execution of this search warrant is regarding, among other things, export filings that relate to the CSARL matter first disclosed in Caterpillar's Form 10-K filed on February 17, 2015, and updated in Caterpillar's most recent Form 10-K filed with the SEC on February 15, 2017."

Agencies involved in the search included the IRS' Criminal Investigation Division, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security's Office of Export Enforcement, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s Office of Inspector General, Paul said.

Officials at the agencies could not be reached for comment.

Police officers enter Caterpillar Inc. headquarters in Peoria, Illinois, on Thursday. GETTY IMAGES

Caterpillar shares fell 4.3 percent to close at $94.36 on the New York Stock Exchange after trading as low as $92.84.

The apparent escalation of the government's tax dispute with Caterpillar comes as the Trump administration and leaders in Congress have said they want to launch a broad overhaul of the corporate tax code, lowering rates and designing the system to encourage companies to keep jobs and profits within the United States. Caterpillar has also had a prominent place in the Trump administration's effort to promote U.S. manufacturing. The company's outgoing chief executive, Douglas Oberhelman, met with President Donald Trump at the White House last week.
REUTERS

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INVASION OF THE TRUMP-SNATCHERS

TOM FOREMAN
Opinion

I don't want to unnecessarily alarm you, but someone needs to check the basement of the White House for pods, because Donald Trump is clearly not himself. Oh sure, the new president looks like, talks like, and combs his hair like the man who won the Oval Office back in November, but I'm pretty sure he is not the same guy.

This week 47 million people tuned in for an address to Congress by the fire-breathing, populist scourge of the DC establishment. No doubt many had buckets of popcorn and Junior Mints ready for the political equivalent of Wrestlemania — a hair ripping, eye-gouging smackdown of the Capitol Hill gang, with all the hyperbole Mr. Trump wears like a cape.

And what did they get? A normal, reasoned, thoughtful speech — one that his political foes still deeply disliked, but a speech that could have been given by any number of his predecessors. No wild conspiracy theories. No lashing out at imaginary enemies. Not even a swift backhand for those of us in the media. So what can explain the change?

Maybe it was just the people at hand. Many have noted President Trump, like a good auctioneer, reads his crowds well. When he stands before his hyperpartisan fans he heaves red meat. When he faces a roomful of reporters, he swats at them like mosquitoes knowing he'll get headlines for what he says, and praise from supporters for how he said it. So when he stands in front of a bunch of career politicians … you get the drift.

Or maybe it was the battering he and his team have taken in these early weeks. Perhaps his plummet in the approval polls convinced him to change his tone.

Or could it be he realized he must get along with some people in that chamber to get any kind of legislation or money to back his big plans?

Or maybe it was the work of aliens.

Whatever the cause, a lot of people are saying he looks presidential — and for all the many things that have been said about Donald Trump, that is a first.

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Trump wants defense buildup to project US power abroad

During the campaign, Trump said he would increase the Army's troop strength and increase the number of ships in the Navy to 350 from about 275 ships.

President Trump GETTY IMAGES

President Donald Trump said on Thursday he wants a U.S. military buildup of more ships and planes to "project American power in distant lands," making his case for a proposed $54 billion increase in defense spending that has U.S. lawmakers squabbling.

Wearing an olive military jacket and hat aboard a new aircraft carrier, the Gerald R. Ford, in Newport News, Virginia, Trump said he wanted the U.S. military to have the finest equipment in the world.

Trump this week proposed a $54 billion increase over last year in defense spending, boosting the Pentagon budget to $603 billion, and said he wanted to launch the biggest military buildup in American history to make up for what he called a depleted armed forces.

Some Republican lawmakers want more money for defense and others, along with Democrats, are opposed to his option for offsetting the cost of the buildup in the U.S. budget. He would cut foreign aid and other non-defense programs by $54 billion.

Trump said he would like to get the U.S. Navy back up to having 12 aircraft carriers. The Navy currently has 10.

"I just spoke with Navy and industry leaders and have discussed my plans to undertake a major expansion of our entire Navy fleet, including the 12 [aircraft]-carrier Navy we need," Trump said, receiving applause.

"We also need more aircraft, modernized capabilities and greater force levels," he said. "Additionally, we must vastly improve our cyber capabilities."

There are questions about how the increase in the budget will be spread across the different service branches and which weapons programs will get priority. REUTERS

Senate confirms Perry as energy secretary

The U.S. Senate on Thursday voted to confirm President Donald Trump's pick to head the Department of Energy, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who has promised to renew America's nuclear weapons arsenal.

Perry's rise to America's top energy official came against opposition from Democrats worried about his ties to oil companies, his doubts about the science of climate change, and the fact that he once called for the department's total elimination — a comment he has since said he regrets.

The Senate voted 62 to 37 in support of Perry.

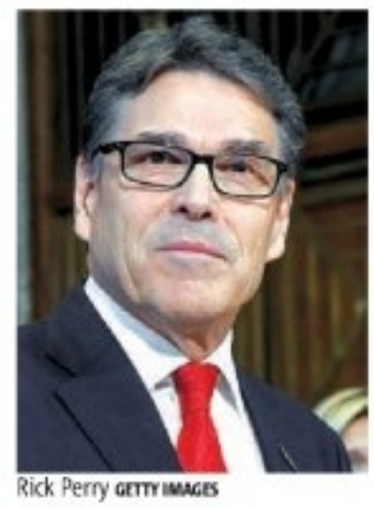
Perry, 66, was governor of Texas from 2000 to 2015, making him the longest-serving governor of the oil-producing state in its history.

As energy secretary, Perry would lead a vast scientific research operation credited with helping trigger a U.S. drilling boom and advancements in energy efficiency and renewables technology, and would oversee America's nuclear arsenal.

In his Senate confirmation hearing, Perry said much of his focus running the department would be in renewing the country's nuclear weapons arsenal. Trump wants to ensure the arsenal is at "the top of the pack" and said the United States had fallen behind in its nuclear weapons capacity.

Democratic lawmakers expressed worry Perry would weaken the department's functions and potentially target its army of scientists focused on climate and clean energy research. Perry sought to reassure them saying he would protect scientists and the growing renewable energy industry.

Democratic Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, a senior


Rick Perry GETTY IMAGES

Democrat on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said Perry had failed to persuade him he would push back against Trump administration plans to cut the department's budget and focus on clean energy R&D.

"As Trump is threatening to slash DOE's budget, Gov. Perry hasn't convinced me he's up to the task of creating those jobs and putting points on the board in the fight against climate change," Wyden said. REUTERS

Boyd Holbrook plays the villain chasing Hugh Jackman's Wolverine through the American West in the gritty comic book movie "Logan." BEN ROTHSTEIN

wknd

Boyd Holbrook vs. Wolverine

The "Narcos" star is no comic book nerd, but he made an exception for the gritty "Logan."

MATT PRIGGE
@mattprigge
matt.prigge@metro.us

Boyd Holbrook doesn't usually do comic book movies. He does dark indie dramas like "The Free World," dark thrillers like "A Walk Among the Tombstones," dark TV shows like "Narcos." (Though, sadly, he won't be in that show's third season.)

The actor wasn't sure he wanted to be in "Logan," the third solo Wolverine picture. Then it turned out it was going to be dark, too. Grimy, gritty and very R-rated, it finds Hugh Jackman's X-Men mutant older, even boozier and angrier still. Holbrook plays the villain, Donald Pierce, a hired goon for a tech corporation trying to genetically engineer their own race of young weaponized mutants. When one of them — a little girl played by Dafne Keen — escapes and seeks our hero's help, Pierce and crew chase them through the American West.

Holbrook, 35, talks to us about making his first blockbuster.

I'm not much of a comic book nerd myself, so I can't ask you comic book nerd questions.
That's OK. I've never read one myself.

Never at all?
Nope. I think I bought a comic once, but I never read it.

So the filmmakers didn't force you to do a deep dive on Wolverine comics?
No, no, no. What they asked me to do was deep dive into the character. This is a character-driven piece. It's rooted in some real family dynamics.

And you got to have a neck tattoo made of guns and skulls.
Yeah, did you like that? A bit of flash. To me that conveys a backstory you really don't have to verbalize in the film.

GETTY IMAGES

This is an unusually gritty, realistic comic book movie.
They even had a disclaimer in the script that read, "If a building falls on your head, you're dead." There's no rising from the ashes.

It's also not an R-rated comic book movie like "Deadpool." It's not a comedy.
That's hat's off to Hugh. He took a pay cut on this one. It's not very commercial. These PG-13 ones have confirmed box office power. To segregate yourself into an R rating, you're taking a risk. But the people who started watching this Logan character 17 years ago are older now. You always wanted to see what Logan is capable of with the claws and all that. I just think it would have been a shame if we didn't go this route.

Breaking bad

Were there certain classic movie villains you studied to play the bad guy?
Picasso's got a great quote: "Good artists take, great artists steal." I'd be lying if I said I didn't know who Alan Rickman was. The villain is usually the best part to play.

Still, even Alan Rickman has said that his "Die Hard" character is not a villain. He said Hans Gruber was just a guy who wanted something others saw as evil.
Yeah, I don't think anyone who's bad constantly goes through the day thinking, "Oh my God, I should really stop doing this!" [Laughs]

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Hugh Jackman plays a worse-for-wear Wolverine in his third solo "X-Men" vehicle, called simply "Logan." BEN ROTHSTEIN

"Logan"

Director: James Mangold
Stars: Hugh Jackman, Dafne Keen
Rating: R

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Professor X (Patrick Stewart) drops an F-bomb. Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) cusses, too, and when he slashes people with his claws, the blades dismember limbs and go through dudes' faces. This could have been a mere novelty; worse, it could have been "Deadpool," the smug, aggressively self-satisfied R-rated annoyance. But it's not more than that. It's a sincere deep wound of a movie about hurt characters who happen to have superpowers.

But it's also a novelty, too. Once you have "Logan" pegged — it's a renegade comic book movie with real-looking violence, subverting our genre expectations — there's not much else to it. Saying a comic book movie doesn't feel like a comic book movie isn't exactly like saying a Donald Trump speech seemed "presidential" because he didn't call opponents names, but it's not far off. If "Logan" is truly aspiring to greatness, we owe it the respect of saying it doesn't quite get there.

But boy, does it try. Set in a dusty, depressing (it not yet apocalyptic) 2029, it finds Logan more in the dumps than ever. He's even reluctant to help a young girl (Dafne Keen). She's also a mutant, and is pursued by some evil corporate goons. The redemption saga that follows wants to be a gritty '70s movie, but the characters are superficial, the anguish shallow. It never eats away at you, and the violence tends to be more about placating gore hounds than delivering real pain. At the end of the day, it's just another parlor trick — a grimier "Deadpool." MATT PRIGGE

"The Shack"

Director: Stuart Hazeldine
Stars: Sam Worthington, Octavia Spencer
Rating: PG-13

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"The Shack" isn't exactly subversive Christian entertainment, but consider this: It features a scene where our mortal hero (Sam Worthington) angrily accuses God, to God's face, of letting his daughter die a horrible death. What's more, the Lord's not some old dude in a white beard; it's Octavia Spencer. Throw in Jesus played by a Middle Eastern actor (Aviv Alush), plus a Holy Spirit that's an Asian woman (Sumire Matsubara), and you have a movie that might ruffle the feathers of its target Middle American audience. Surely they won't look kindly on their divine honchos depicted as nonwhite, let alone female.

This is a different breed of evangelical cinema than "Heaven is for Real" or "Miracles from Heaven" or (ye gods) "God's Not Dead." It's ambitious and genuinely challenging, putting in the work of grappling with challenging theological ideas.. And yet it's still not very good. It's still shackled to a genre of toxic sincerity and questionable logic. Worthington plays Mack, a grieving father mysteriously lured to a remote cabin. There he meets the embodiments of the Holy Trinity, and over the course of a backwoods getaway weekend they walk Mack through his bottomless grief, all while hashing out some of the Big Questions.

Part apologetics tract, part self-help manual, "The Shack" features plenty of God talk, but it's not the easy, reassuring kind. It understands that pain isn't easily overcome, and it wrestles with the idea that an all-knowing, all-loving God would allow such tragedies to occur. Of course, it still peddles some easy answers, and falls back on a cop-out ending. Still, it's almost a real movie. MP

Sam Worthington has a chat with God (played by Octavia Spencer) in "The Shack." JAKE GILES NETTER

Zoey Deutch plays a mean girl high schooler who finds herself reliving the same day, just like "Groundhog Day," in the YA drama "Before I Fall." AWESOMENESS FILMS

"Before I Fall"

Director: Ry Russo-Young
Stars: Zoey Deutch, Halston Sage
Rating: PG-13

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Far as "Groundhog Day" knockoffs go, "Before I Fall" has nothing on "Edge of Tomorrow." That's not true: Another terrific Zoey Deutch performance is at least as novel as marauding alien squiddies and Tom Cruise gruesomely dying ad nauseum. But an alien invasion movie sounds better than a serious and earnest YA movie, turning a comedy classic into "Chicken Soup for the Brooding Teenage Soul." This is a film that would never think, for example, to have its hero do anything like killing herself by driving off a cliff with a stolen groundhog.

Not that "Before I Fall" is standard YA fluff. For one thing, it has Deutch. She plays Sam, part of a rampaging clique who giggle too much, sing along to iTunes and, occasionally, make life hell for outcasts. After a rager on "Cupid's Day," all four get into a corker of a car crash. Sam wakes up in bed, intuiting that she's mysteriously jumped back 24 hours. Now she's forced to realize that the unexamined and catty life looks pretty wretched when it happens on infinite repeat.

With her open, boundlessly expressive face, Deutch is too lively a screen presence to do anything but elevate potentially wan material. Indie director Ry Russo-Young helps, too. She delivers the YA goods: banal narration, toxic sincerity, powerfully chaste kisses. But she also knows how to work around it. "Before I Fall" has more moods than one, and it never feels like a dirge about young adults who don't realize the world won't end because they're sad. In fact, it turns out to be the opposite. MP

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Martina McBride is turning off the news and turning up the music

The country singer wants to create a safe space for her fans.

JENNIFER LOGUE
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Martina McBride comes to the Keswick Theatre in Glenside tonight. PROVIDED

Country star Martina McBride is traveling the country spreading positive energy through music on her Love Unleashed tour. Known for hits like "My Baby Loves Me" and "Independence Day," McBride has won countless Country Music Association awards and has been nominated for 14 Grammys. On March 3, she comes to the Keswick Theatre singing throwbacks as well as songs from her newest album "Reckless." McBride chats with us about putting family first, turning off the news and staying neutral politically.

On your website, you talk about the importance of people coming together through music to spread positivity. Why is that more important than ever right now?

The world we're living in is kind of crazy and there's 24/7 [news] coverage and it can get really overwhelming and negative — it's not healthy. Last fall, I had to think, "How do I combat this for my own mental health and my daughters?" We started turning off the news and not getting on the internet as much. We started spending more time listening to music and replacing the negative with positive experiences. I wanted to do that for my fans, too — creating a space where we can come together and leave the world outside for a couple hours.

Country music has a conservative fan base, traditionally. In the current political climate, are you staying neutral or speaking out about your own views?

I don't really feel like it's my role. I'm here to create music and to make people feel things through that. I don't really spend a lot of time thinking about what my fan base is politically. If I spent time thinking that, it really gets in the way of what I'm supposed to do — which is really to create this experience where people can escape for a minute.

You released your newest album, "Reckless," in April of last year. What's the most personal song for you?

Probably "Reckless." It's a song about unconditional love and gratitude for that. I've been married for almost 30 years so my husband, you know, has shown that to me and vice versa. So It's about being loved when you're not at your best — somebody who's kind of reckless enough to love you anyway, no matter what.

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That's beautiful. So how is touring now different than it was in the beginning of your career?

I think I'm enjoying it even more. As you do this longer you get more relaxed and more comfortable on stage, and I've luckily got a long list of hits that we can play that people come to hear. I'm enjoying it a lot.

It's like you're able to savor it more. So what are three things you can't live without on tour these days?

Good coffee, a humidifier and my dog, Mae. She's a maltipoo.

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What to expect at Bechdel Test Fest in Philly

Philly comedian Rachel Fogletto performs at last year's Bechdel Test Fest. PROVIDED

From Joan Rivers to Rosie O'Donnell, from Phyllis Diller to Leslie Jones, women have made a significant impact on stand-up comedy. While nationally recognized names are continuing to command stages, TV screens and movies, hilarious women continue this path even at the local level. On March 3 and 4, this impact will be felt in Philadelphia as the Bechdel Test Fest, a comedy festival for both women and trans comedians, descends on the Christ Church Neighborhood House for a second year.

The festival came into being through an online group of female improv comedians in 2014, who had created a community around the idea. The name is derived from the Bechdel Test, which measures whether or not a work of fiction features at least two female characters having a conversation about a topic other than men. The modern-day test traces its roots to a 1985 edition of Alison Bechdel's comic strip "Dykes to Watch Out For."

Rachel Fogletto, who has produced a number of all-female comedy shows throughout the city, including the monthly "Broad Humor" at Ray's Happy Birthday Bar in South Philadelphia, is one of the event's five co-organizers. "Our scene has a plethora of insanely talented femme comedians and Bechdel Test Fest will make sure you never forget it," Fogletto says.

Fellow comedians and co-organizers Mo Manklang Kingston and Beth Eisenberg agree. They are excited to see the Bechdel Test Fest enter its second year with a bang.

"Last year, with our packed house and talented performers, we made a statement — there is a huge pool of hilarious women in Philly," Kingston says. "This year we are even bigger with two days of comedy, featuring more than 60 acts and 130 performers."

"While attending the festival you get the sense that the Philadelphia women's comedy scene is immensely talented while simultaneously feeling completely connected through community," Eisenberg adds. MIKE FENN

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NFL head coach power rankings

Two AFC head coaches with Super Bowl rings top our list of best active NFL head coaches. GETTY IMAGES

No. 1

Bill Belichick

Evan Macy, Metro Philadelphia sports editor: Matt and I considered trolling everyone by putting Belichick second, but with five Super Bowl rings, he's not only the best active coach in the NFL, but probably one of the four or five best ever to coach the game.

Matt Burke, Metro Boston sports editor: One of the four or five best ever?! This is why Belichick is going to coach until he's 100 — to convince every last person on the planet that he is greater than Lombardi or Noll or Walsh. When Lombardi was winning titles there were 14 teams in the league and no free agency. Belichick now has five Super Bowl titles in a much more difficult era.

No. 2

Mike Tomlin

EM: Tomlin's Steelers overcame a bevy of injuries and setbacks last season to make a quiet run at an AFC Championship Game.

No. 3

Dan Quinn

MB: Kyle Shanahan deservers half the blame for the Falcons not killing the clock down the stretch in Super Bowl 51, but the buck needs to stop with Quinn.

No. 4

Mike McCarthy

EM: There were too many pieces missing last year for the Packers to make it to the Super Bowl, but it was impressive they got as close as they did.

No. 5

Pete Carroll

MB: Carroll refused to put Richard Sherman on the injury report all season despite the corner's MCL injury and now the team will likely be docked a second round pick.

No. 6

Bill O'Brien

EM: He lost arguably the best defensive player in football in J.J. Watt and had some of the ugliest QB play in the NFL, yet still led his team to the second round.

No. 7

Andy Reid

MB: He's gone an impressive 43-21 in the regular season during his time in K.C., but has just one playoff win (over the Texans and Brian Hoyer) in his four years there.

No. 8

Adam Gase

EM: The award for biggest leap in these rankings goes to Gase, who pretty much took the Fins out of nowhere to a wild-card spot.

No. 9

Jason Garrett

MB: The Cowboys had two weeks to prepare for Aaron Rodgers and couldn't deal. The next week the Falcons solved Rodgers pretty easily. Brutal job by Garrett.

No. 10

John Harbaugh

EM: What do you to with a Super Bowl winning coach who hasn't done much with his team lately? Throw him at No. 10.

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B116 John Riley (Household Items), B126 Carla Jeudy (Boxes & Bins), B186C Herbert A. Brown (Household Goods), B216C Attilah Sistrunk (Household Items), C194C Darryl K. Richardson (Church Equipment), C211C Harrison D. Babor (Household Items), F147 Dionne-Etta Mitchell (Clothes & Shoes)

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Notice is hereby given that Extra Space Storage will sell at public auction at the storage facility listed below, to satisfy the lien of the owner, personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at location indicated: Extra Space Storage **12005 Roosevelt Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19154 215-514-2704, March 15, 2017** at **2:30pm.**

L2 John Grogan - computer towers and equipment, F6 Pablo Camacho - furniture and household items, B29 Elizabeth A Maddy - stomp grinder, household items/clothes, B13 Ashraf Abuhanak - furniture, J12 Mark Mootoo - furniture

Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.

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245 - Shahida Jefferson (household goods, clothes), 194 - Esther Michelle Daity (couple bedroom sets, dining room, boxes), 443 - Matthew Alex Hughes (household goods), 281 - Venus Campbell (household, furniture), 555 - Kandace M Brettle (house goods, shoes, furniture)

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Jorge Alfaro will be looking to land the Phillies' backup catcher role. GETTY IMAGES

Keep tabs on these positional battles during spring training

Who will close games for the Phillies this year?

KYLE PHILLIPPI
@Kyle_Phillippi
sports@metro.us

We take a glance at what will be the most competitive positions for the Phillies this spring.

Backup catcher

Maybe this isn't the most glorifying position to follow especially when the incumbent, Cameron Rupp, most likely will start five to six times a week. Yet, the Phillies' most interesting battle for an Opening Day roster spot could be Rupp's backup.

The two who will jockey for position are Andrew Knapp and Jorge Alfaro. The latter is two years younger than the former, with Alfaro appearing in six games in the bigs toward the end of last season. Meanwhile, Knapp has yet to appear with the Phillies.

The six-game difference won't factor much into their decision since Alfaro struck out eight times with just two hits in 16 at-bats. General manager Matt Klentak previously said the organization knew these two would battle one another for a roster spot at some point. It'll be a matter of who puts together the strongest spring in the difference between backing up Rupp on Opening Day or starting for Lehigh Valley.

51

NUMBER OF CAREER SAVES FOR JOAQUIN BENOIT

Closer

Jeanmar Gomez? Hector Neris? Joaquin Benoit? These are all questions being asked by the Phillies brass. Gomez has the experience to his advantage, even with just one season of being the man in charge in the ninth inning. Gomez started off strong last season, finding himself among the league leaders in saves through the early months of the campaign but tailed off a bit in the second half.

Neris and Benoit don't have much experience in the ninth, but with Gomez's struggles toward the end, they'll have the chance to win the position if they want. The projected back-end of the bullpen, though, and most likely the one most desired is Gomez in the ninth, Benoit in the eighth and Neris flipping between the seventh and eighth.

Backup first baseman

If Knapp, or Alfaro, makes this roster, one of the two could fill in as both the backup catcher and first baseman if need be. That being said, the early portion of spring training has gave way to a surprising star in Brock Stassi.

Stassi is a first baseman who would fill in nicely behind Tommy Joseph, but he also has some experience in the outfield having been drafted as one. Stassi is 4-for-6 with two homers and six RBI as of March 1. That's as an impressive of a start as anyone could have hoped for from him.

If he even plays half as well as that the rest of the way, don't be surprised if the 27-year-old finally gets his chance in the big leagues.

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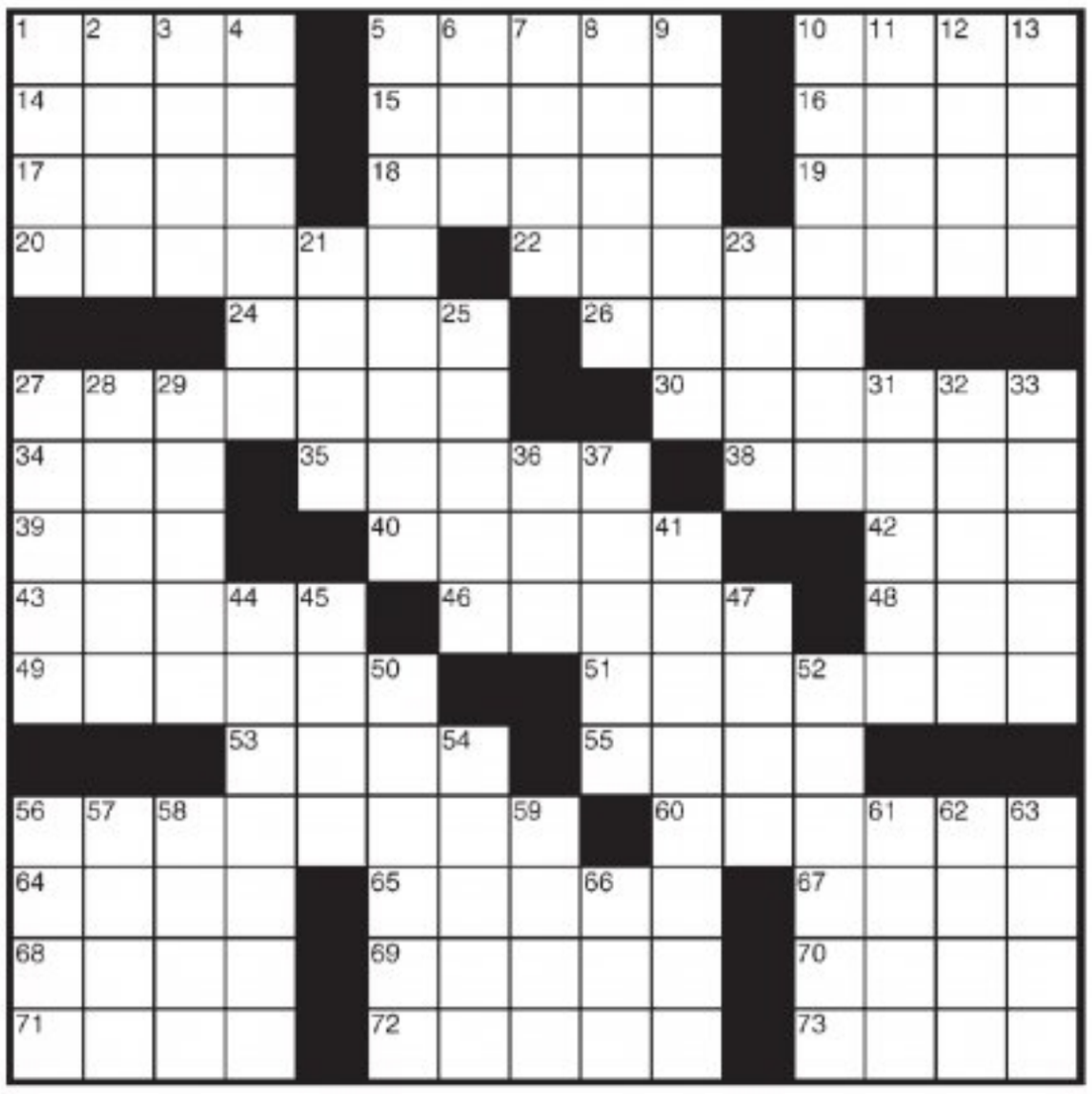

Across
1 Bend over backward
5 Glacier break-offs
10 Forked over
14 Rail rider
15 Market upturn
16 Viking character
17 You said it!
18 Cays
19 Wednesday's god
20 Jaunty lids
22 Goings-on
24 Julian's stepmom
26 Garr of "Tootsie"
27 Root vegetable
30 Reduced to pulp
34 Feel grateful
35 Clumsy
38 Bete --
39 Chocolate-colored dog
40 Wave hello
42 Keystone Konstable
43 Polygraph flunkers
46 Video-game pioneer
48 Tokyo, to shoguns
49 Main drag
51 Muezzin's post
53 Conceited
55 Slumps
56 Grandeur
60 Hummer lure
64 "Fargo" director
65 Deliver
67 Canal of song
68 In a dither
69 Leave no choice
70 Leaf juncture
71 Got up
72 Likes and dislikes
73 Did batik

Down
1 Moby Dick foe
2 Chariot race locale
3 Driver with a handle
4 Sweetie-pies
5 Performing a pat-down
6 Refrain syllables
7 Earthen pot
8 Pick a party
9 Solar --
10 Stipulation
11 Import vehicle
12 -- -- for keeps
13 Withhold
21 Singer -- Tennille
23 Where Tabriz is
25 Horse --
27 Surveys
28 Look forward to
29 Concrete reinforcer
31 Backpacker
32 Carve a canyon
33 Redcap's domain
36 Boxer, maybe
37 Dogsled pullers
41 Bermuda --
44 An eye for an eye
45 Connery of 007 fame
47 He wrote "Picnic"
50 Juicy morsel
52 Scale
54 "-- Rae"
56 Heal over
57 Comic-strip possum
58 Tolstoy et al.
59 Turbulent currents
61 Besieged city of old
62 Helper
63 Wind instrument
66 Soccer goal

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easy

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hard

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		8	6					
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metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Finish what you start and avoid taking on more than you can handle. Allot your time carefully and refuse to let anyone slow you down by asking for unrealistic demands.

Taurus Get involved in meaningful events. Your input and solutions will be considered if you take the initiative to engage in the discussion with verve and discipline.

Gemini Money problems will increase if you make purchases you cannot afford. Live within your means if you want to avoid being put in your place. Behave and save.

Cancer Partnerships look promising. Contribute to something you believe in, but don't let anyone take you for granted financially. Surround yourself with helpers, not users.

Leo A partnership will go through uncertainty if you cannot come to a workable agreement. Take a moment to consider the probable loss should you not compromise.

Virgo Traveling and learning should be high on your list. Sign up for a course or go on a retreat that will engage your mind and give you the wisdom to make a favorable choice.

Libra Get along with your peers, but don't go overboard and take on the brunt of the responsibilities. Make sure everyone knows what you expect in return.

Scorpio Don't feel obliged to travel. Set the standard and guide others to follow suit. If you don't make requests, you cannot expect to bring about change.

Sagittarius Look at the big picture, but don't feel the necessity to buy the acceptance of others. Make your position clear and don't be afraid to make changes.

Capricorn Add to your comfort and well-being. Use your experience and strong intuition to choose the people you want in your life and the level of their involvement.

Aquarius You'll receive an unexpected gift. A settlement or new contract that offers greater hope for future endeavors will head your way if you embrace change.

Pisces Stamina and drive will help you secure what you want. Trust in your gut feeling and follow your instincts in order to make the right choice. EUGENIA LAST

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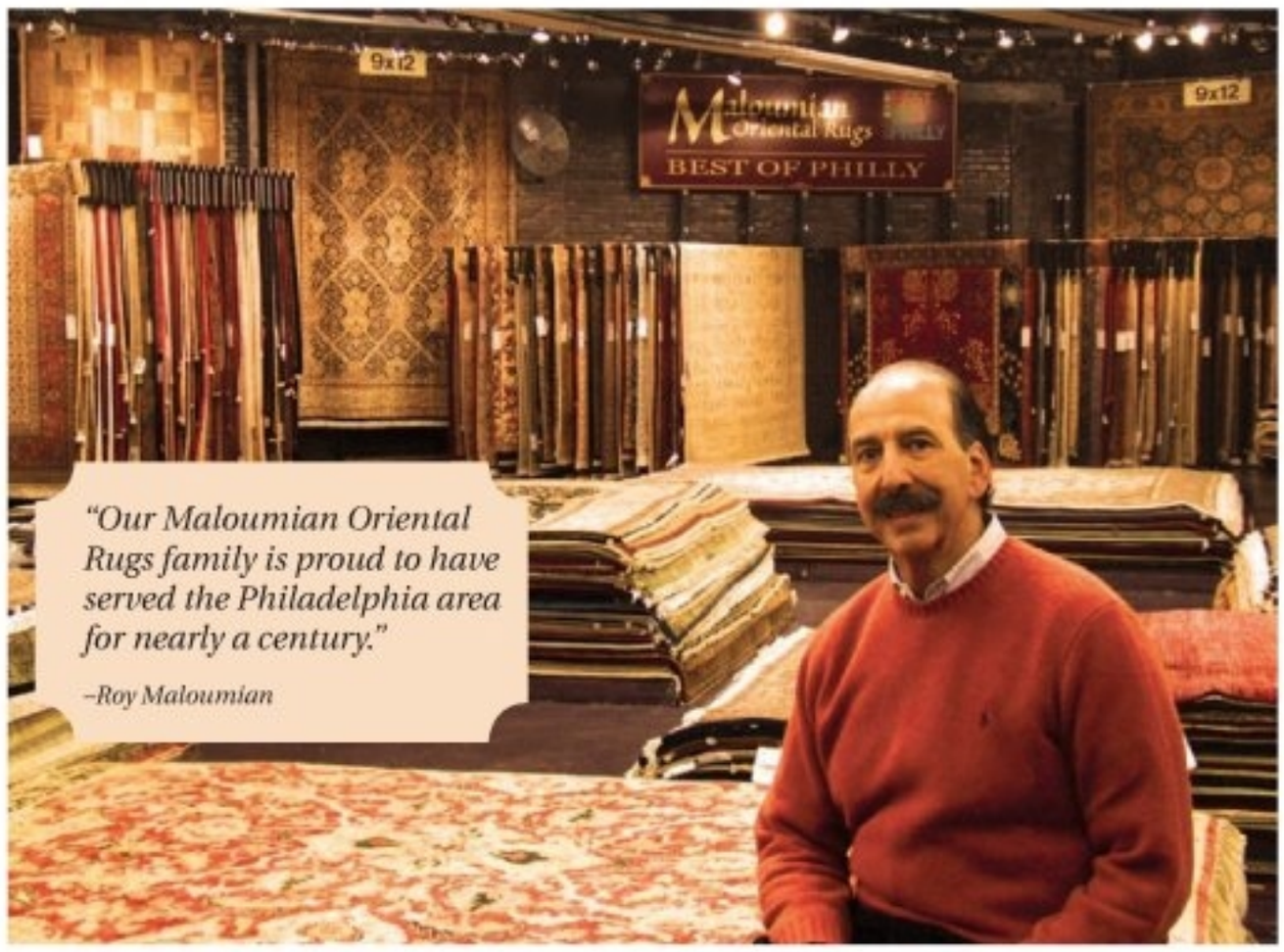
Maloumian—the area's most trusted Oriental Rug Authority—is moving its showrooms to Florida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Maloumian Oriental Rugs
BEST OF PHILLY
"Our Maloumian Oriental Rugs family is proud to have served the Philadelphia area for nearly a century."
–Roy Maloumian

Roy Maloumian in the Mt. Airy location of Maloumian Oriental Rugs, founded in 1927. Roy represents the 3rd generation of Maloumians who are Oriental rug experts in the Philadelphia area and soon multiple locations in Florida.

Save 60% to 80% on a genuine Maloumian Oriental Rug before the Philadelphia location closes

Philadelphia area's loss is Florida's gain

The Maloumian Oriental Rugs 90-year tradition of selling the highest quality Oriental rugs at exceptional savings in the Philadelphia area is about to end—but it will continue in Florida.

Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to enhance your home with a genuine Maloumian Oriental Rug before their sales division moves to Florida—and get 0% financing for 18 months.

The Maloumian tradition of selling exquisite first-quality rugs will continue in 7 Robb and Stucky locations in Florida.

"Customers in the Philadelphia area can continue to rely on our expertise for cleaning and restoration of their rugs."

–Roy Maloumian

Visit Maloumian—and their exquisite rug selection—in Florida

Maloumian Oriental Rugs is joining the Robb and Stucky International family of luxury home furnishing stores in Naples, Ft. Myers, Sarasota and Coral Gables. And they'll be expanding their sales division in additional Robb and Stucky locations in Boca Raton (2017) and in Miami and Palm Beach (2018).

For elegance, expertise and excellent prices, experience the Maloumian Oriental Rugs difference

Named 'Best of Philly' 2015, Maloumian welcomes you to their showroom, located just south of Chestnut Hill at **231 West Mt. Pleasant Ave., Philadelphia**

Open Mon-Fri 9 am – 5 pm, Sat 10 am – 5 pm, and Sundays noon – 5 pm.

(215) 375-7760

RoysRugs.com

Roy Maloumian Oriental Rugs
DISCOUNT WAREHOUSE OUTLET

Maloumian's expert cleaning and restoration services are staying in Philadelphia

The Maloumian rug cleaning and restoration professionals aren't going anywhere. Customers in the Philadelphia area can rely on Maloumian for:

- Use of the centuries-old Makoor™ method to clean Oriental rugs
- Meticulous, gentle cleaning by hand to maintain the beauty of your rug
- No risk of damage from harsh shampoos, chemicals and machines

Maloumian Oriental Rugs has a $20 million inventory of thousands of exceptional quality rugs at discount prices.